JUNE 1984 — 5744

KJA Bulletin

P.O.BOX 4235
Mtn View, Ca. 94040

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Our First Installation

OUR PRESIDENT, MR. JACOB MASLIAH

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF OUR COMMUNITY, HONORABLE GUESTS,

We gather today to present the first legally elected members of the new Board of Directors of the Karaite Jews of America. As you all know, the last year Board of Directors was hastily chosen and the first objective was to legalize our organization and to prepare for the election of the new Board of Directors.

Well, our organization has been approved by the Government and has been recognized as a non-profit organization, thanks to the remarkable efforts of our Secretary, Mr. Maurice Pessah.

We have formed a Committee for Fund Raising in order to have a place of worshop of our own in the Bay Area for the purpose of praying according to our Karaite traditions and to collect books of interest to form the basis of a library. I am proud to announce that we reached about 75% of our goal for last year's fund drive.

We have also formed a Committee for Prayers, headed by our acting Rab, Mr. Joe Pessah. We have the permission to use the facilities of the Peninsula Sinai Congregation as often as available, to worship according to our traditions, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Fred Lichaa.

We have formed a Committee for Sisterhood, headed by Mrs. Mary Mourad, to take care of our Social Activities, to strengthen the relationship between the members of our Community. And I must admit that without this Committee, this wonderful party could not have been possible.

Last but not least, we had the chance to perform a Karaite Religious Wedding for the first time in the United States and we are on our way to publishing a Karaite "Ketubbah" of our own and we hope to have these happy events recorded.

We are doing our best to keep you informed of the news of our Community and other subjects of interest as regularly as possible, thanks to the great efforts of the Bulletin Committee who spend hours and hours of hard work.

Briefly speaking, all this work was accomplished by devoted, hard working people. Not only the members of the Board of Directors have shouldered responsibilities but many others also gladly volunteered to offer their time and efforts. If you compare the size of our Community to any other Community, you can easily appreciate the results of the work done in such a short time. These sincere people deserve our appreciation. Let us give them a good hand.

This year, we are planning to continue our efforts for the benefit of our Community in general and particularly for our children. We shall teach them the Hebrew Language and encourage them to attend the Prayers so that they grow up proud of our religion and stand up and be counted.

This year we have to reach our goal in fund raising for which we badly need your financial as well as your moral support. So please give generously as much as you can.

God Bless You All

THE OATH

Please place your right hand on the Sepher Ha'Torah, Say: 'I', '(pronounce your name)' and repeat after me:
I do hereby and hereon, solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will obey the Constitution and By-laws of the Karaite Jews of America, perform all the duties of my position and do my best to reach our goals.

So help me God and keep me steadfast in the proper observance of the duties of the Board of Directors of the Karaite Jews of America.

THE ATTACHMENT OF THE KARAITES TO JERUSALEM
(Joe Pessah's speech)

Love for Jerusalem and all for which it literally and symbolically stands has always been fundamental to the Karaites. Since the emergence of the Jewish people as a Nation at the moment of the Exodus from Egypt the yearning for a homeland, "a land flowing with milk and honey," has been a driving force. "Yerushalayim" in Hebrew is a compound of two words: "yerousha" and "lahem" meaning an inheritance for them (Bnei Yisrael). All indications in the Bible, however, indicate that this is not a mere gift to "The Chosen People". B'nei Yisrael cannot qualify for it through an accumulation of money or power. The nation entitled to claim Yerushalayim must undergo a purification of body and soul by strictly following the ways of the Lord as revealed in the Bible.

Thus, the Israelites after the Exodus had to spend forty years in the desert enduring tests and learning the laws which comprised the purification process. Those deemed unfaithful died in the desert. Even a man as meritorious as Moses, due to a "transgression," was not permitted to enter the promised land. He was, however, granted the priviledge to gaze from afar upon the land to which he had brought the Hebrew Nation.

In the Torah, the Hebrew Nation is commanded to visit the holy city of Jerusalem three times a year on each of the SHALOSH REGALIM, the three pilgrimage festivals of Pessah, Shavouth and Sukkoth. When the temples were destroyed and the people exiled, however, the symbol of Yerushalayim became the single strongest yearning force for the Jews in the Diaspora. Even before the destruction of the Holy Temples, there were dissidents in the Holy Land. It appears that the "people of the caves," (Qumran) upon seeing the corruption of the Jewish Nation in the North, separated themselves from the world and retreated into the desert, crica 200 B.C.E. These people believed in the redemption of Israel through their staunch belief in the coming of the Messiah.

In the eight century, a descendent of the House of David Ha Melech, Anan Ha-Nasi (a.k.a. Anan Ben David) became the leader of similar sect of Jews who have continued to observe the most traditional forms of worship and methods of ritual purification. These people, called Ananites and later Karaites, continued to exist in Jerusalem and to retain spiritual as well as physical ties to the Holy City. An underground synagogue built by Anan exists even today as evidence of this perpetual connection. Even after the destruction of the temples and the Exile of the Jews, some Karaite leaders remained in Jerusalem. Among the exiles, moreover, many Karaite Preachers, like Saadia ben Masliah, urged the people to emigrate to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a strong intelectual center for the Karaites. In the year 1099 the Crusaders brought an abrupt halt to the Karaites in the Holy City, by burning alive those they could gather into a synagogue. The Karaite leadership was then transferred to Egypt.

THE KARAITES IN EGYPT

It is uncertain exactly when the Karaites did dwell in Egypt. They, however, must have lived there for more than a thousand years. Through all this time their spiritual ties to Jerusalem pervaded the very essence of their lives.

-When the Karaites pray, they always face toward Jerusalem.

-Their sanctuaries maintained the serious environment of a holy place where there is order, regulation, humility and strict

ritual cleanliness. The Karaites, furthermore, believe that the destruction of the temples is a result of the sins of the Jews. Because of this, the Karaites have immersed themselves in a state of constant mourning for Zion.

-Through continual prayer and fasting the Karaites hope to underscore their fervor in following the words of the Lord. There is a prominent penitential flavor in their prayers. "Redeem us oh Lord, not for our sake but for the sake of Your Name. Redeem us so other nations will not say "where is their Lord?"

-The Karaites have even abolished the use of the Shofar in the Rosh Hashanah service since the ram's horn is a symbol of triumph and no one can triumph while the Holy City of Jerusalem remains unconquered and in non-Jewish hands.

-In the Karaite Brith Milah service the boy is described as an inheritor of Jerusalem.

-Even in the homes, the Karaites parent will coax a child to finish the food on his plate pleading: "if you finish this piece HaShem will love you and you'll get to go to Jerusalem."

-All Karaites are brought up with the dream: "Le Shana HaBaah Be Yerushalayim," Next year may be in Jerusalem. It is the ultimate reward.

-Even in the Karaite wedding ceremony, a supposedly happy event, the Rav will spread ashes (a symbol of ruin and destruction) to remind the bride and groom that one is never to forget the devastated status of Jerusalem. The Rav will underscore this by repeating to them the curse that will befall the person who forgets as written in the Script.

-The final wish of many Karaite elders has repeatedly been to have their remains enterred in holy soil. When this was impossible to achieve, people purchased bags of sand from the Holy Land for use in Karaite burials.

The Karaites in Egypt prospered. Many Karaites held prominent positions in their communities. There were clusters of compact communities in the Hara.

TURNING POINT

In 1948 the birth of the State of Israel became a reality and renewed the hope of the Karaites in Egypt. Early one morning in that year a bomb shattered the peace of the community destroying a home and dismembering the children inside. This was the beginning of the loss of many lives as the persecution of the Karaites was kindled.

In 1955, martyrdom of our neighbor, Dr. Moshe Marzouk, occurred. Born into a dignified family, he must have possessed an extraordinay character. The famous writer and journalist Soheir el Kalamawi, while visiting the Marzouk family was reported to have stated to the martyr's mother: "I hope that your son grows to be a good Arab citizen and not a Zionist.." Dr. Marzouk, however, grew to become the head of the Zionist Group in Cairo. He was later arrested, convicted of treason and hanged despite the desperate pleas to former President Nasser from the Shamuel family. This same family at one time has secured a haven for Nasser when he was personally in danger. I clearly remember the day of his execution. My father returned home from synagogue joining his hands in despair and saying: "we lost the man." Everyone was fasting and praying. The women did not cease crying. After the execution the bitterness toward the Jews increased. Properties were confiscated and nationalized. Jews were not permitted to hold public offices. Surprise raids were

conducted on their homes in the hopes of finding Zionist literature. Leaders were arrested. Little did we realize that history was about to repeat itself. We were imprisoned and tortured and denied permission to leave the country.

The night of the fifth of June 1967 was a turning point for the Karaite Jews of Egypt. Feeling the overwhelming power of the Arabs, the Jews began to pray and fast in their desire to prevent the emanent destruction of Israel. They were still fasting when, on the following day, they were arrested en masse and beaten. All males over the age of 18 were arrested. During my own interrogation an Egyptian officer stated to me: "It is true that you are an Arab citizen, but your heart is beating for Israel." We were unable to defend ourselves against such an accusation. For three years we existed in prison suffering atrocities beyond description. We could not even reveal to our wives the indescribable and incomprehensible conditions under which we lived. The torture was inscrutable. This was the price to pay for Jerusalem and we accepted it. Nasser, like the ancient Pharaoh, refused to let us go. And the miracle was the Six Day War. Our ancestors left with gold and silver. We left with nothing. In all, it took twenty years (1948-1967) to destroy the thousand year old community of the Karaites in Egypt, leaving behind priceless documents and codexes of our heritage.

Like the first one, this second Exodus took most of the Karaites to Israel of course. Those who came to the United States needed time to adopt and re-organize. In their search for identity, the Karaites were told that the world Jewry is not comprised of Karaim and Rabbanim but rather composed of no karaim and many different types of Rabbanim. They are dealt an outrageous blow in some western books when they read of debates on whether the Karaites are Jews. Many incorrect comments are written about them. The word Karaim means nothing to many knowledgeables and if it evoques some souvenirs they are often far away from the reality. The western references should be rewritten to integrate Karaism as being on the many different aspects that embellishes Judaism. The Karaites in Israel have faced a problem that was the least of their worries: being aknowledged as Jews. On the other hand, the Falashas who share a lot in common with their doctrines were recognized.

What is difficult to the Karaim in America is the fact that one does not have to believe in God to be considered a Jew. Karaim never openly criticize the State of Israel. This could only lead to disunity and destruction. It is most difficult to reconcile this with the First Amendment which grants free speech. I conclude with our and most fundamental guideline.

If money is lost, nothing is lost.
If lives are sacrificed to Jerusalem, may be that's
what we have to do to keep our land.
But if Jerusalem is lost, then everything to us is lost.

(Reedited for publishing)



Dr. W. M. Brinner
Mr. Jacob Masliah



Mr. Masliah
Mr. Joe Wahed

Members of the Board



EXCERPTS OF THE INTRODUCTION DONE BY MR. JOE WAHED.

The rest of the program will consist essentially of listening to Professor Brinner. Then, after that, I have been asked by Jacob Masliah, the President, to make an award presentation. The meeting, we hope, will end at 8:00 p.m. sharp so that we can go back to our homes.

This is the most difficult part of my job as host and master of ceremonies because I have in front of me the resume and Curriculum Vitae or biography of Professor Brinner. Don't let his youthful appearance confuse you. He has such an incredible career and life that he must be at least 350 years old. I think it all started when he went to Jewish Day School in San Francisco. So any young people here listen carefully; Jewish Day School must do wonders. Professor Brinner was born in San Francisco, he's a native of the City and received his Ph.D. in Near Eastern studies from the University of California at Berkeley in 1956. In addition to teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies at Berkeley, Professor Brinner has taught at Harvard and summer programs at John Hopkins and UCLA. He has a tremendous academic background. He is an expert on the Middle East. If you remember many years ago, there was a program on KQED called World Press, he was the most interesting person to listen to because he has sober thoughts and intelligent comments. He has taught in Jerusalem, in Haifa and Tel Aviv and in other Universities in America; but, interestingly for us, from Egypt, he spent some time in Cairo at the American University. He has published tremendous amounts of reports and publication on the Middle East, on Jewsish/Arab relations; but, I think what strikes me most about Professor Brinner is that he is a selfless, unselfish person who has devoted a large part of his time and career to the cause, and the cause is Judaism and the Jewsih community. I think Professor Brinner must have spoken in every single temple, in every single Jewish Community Center in the Bay Area over the last ten or fifteen years. I think we all owe Professor Brinner a special heartfelt thanks from us Karaites simply because we are not known as well by others people except by Professor Brinner. Please welcome warmly Professor Brinner.

DR BRINNER'S SPEECH ON THE KARAITE CONTRIBUTION TO JUDAISM.

Thank you very much. I am really very moved by being here this evening, especially because just a few months ago on my last visit to Cairo, I had occasion to walk through Harat El Yahoud and I had a chance to see the ruins of Jewish life in Egypt and I didn't dream at that time that I would be standing in a room full of real life Karaites and so to me it's a very moving experience to see a live community, self-respecting community of Karaites. Joe Wahed mentioned before Sham El Nesim which reminded me that in 1962 which was the only time I ever took my family to Cairo with me, we spent a couple months in Cairo, and I was preparing them for Sham El Nesim and I told the family that we're going out on a picnic, everybody goes out to smell the fresh breeze of spring. I didn't tell them about Fesikh; but, I told them that we would have a wonderful picnic that day. The day dawned and you couldn't see the sky, it was covered with clouds of sand, it was a tremendous sand storm. Sham El Nesim was postponed. It didn't take place that year. It was one of the worst days we'd ever had and

the memory came back when I heard the reference to that day.

Speaking of special days, in Israel today is Yom Hashua, the day of the Holocaust remembrance. We remember the six million Jews of Europe who were killed by the Nazis and unfortunately there is no day on which we remember the thousands of Jews in the Arab countries who suffered and who died, who were in prison, who went to the gallows and incidentally, Mr. Pessah before mentioned Dr. Marzuk. We have to remember that the Egyptians did not differentiate between Karaites and Rabbinites. Together with Dr. Marzuk, Shmouel Lazar also went to the gallows on the same day. It did'nt matter whether you were a Karaite or a Rabbinite, you were a Jew. And that's one reason that I'm here today because I am a Jew and you are Jews and to me it doesn't matter whether you are a Karaite and I'm a Rabbinite. What is important is that we are representatives of a people with a past, with a present, and we are determined to have a future. And so I think it's important for us not only to look back, but, to think about the future and what has to be done. But let's look at the past.

A great deal divided us, over the years there was a lot of animosity, hatred, nasty words were traded back and forth. For what purpose?! Today, when I mentioned to some Jewish friends, that I was going to be speaking at a Karaite group, they said: What? Who?. Generally, go to any temple in this area, any synagogue in this area, mention Karaites to the Rabbinite Jews, they have no idea that such a group existed or exists today. You are aware of us; unfortunately most of us are not aware of you. And that is something that I hope will be changed through your organization, through your determination to live your lives according to your anciant tradition. The tradition which is very anciant because it represents not only what Anan Ben David started because he didn't start it. He merely revived an older tradition, the tradition of dissent in Judaism which to me is one of the most beautiful aspects of Jewish life. No matter how much certain Rabbis whould like to suppress it today, pluralism and dissent are important. Just as there was a Bet Hillel and a Bet Shami among the Rabbis of the Talmud, who differed on every question, and yet both remained Jews and both are considered Orthodox, there can be Karaites and there can be Rabbinites. We are all Jews and the thing that makes us all Jews is not only our faith but also our fate because if anything, God forbid, happens to Jews, just as the Egyptians didn't distinguish between Marzuk and Azod, the world will not distinguish between Rabbinites and Karaites. Our faith is the same, our fate is the same, our faith in God and the Torah, no matter how we interpret it differently.

What I'd like to talk about very briefly tonight because I am not going to teach you about Karaism, I want you to teach me, what I'd like to talk about essentially is what are the contributions of Karaism to Judaism, to the Jews in general because I think they are very important contributions.

First of all I believe that it was the great gift of the Karaites to return the Torah to the Jewish people. I'll tell you what I mean by that. The Torah is what we have in common. Certain Jews in their zeal to interpret the Torah, develop that great sea of learning which is called the Talmud. And became so immersed in that sea that

they forgot the spring, the source from which the Talmud came. And it took the Karaites to remind us that without the Torah, the Talmud is meaningless. And when you look at what happened in Jewish history, once the Karaites appeared and became important and we have to remember that at one period, it is estimated that 40% of the Jewish world was Karaite, once the Karaites appeared, the study of Torah revived among Rabbinite Jews. Why, because they had to answer the Karaites. Because the Karaites began to raise questions and to interpret things in a way that the Rabbinites wanted to be able to answer and so they began to study the Torah.

Similarly, the Karaites gave back to us the Hebrew language. Now I am exaggerating in both cases when I say they gave back to us the Torah, gave back the Hebrew language. Of course I am exaggerating. But I have a point here. Because as you know the Babylonian Talmud, Talmud Bavely was created in what is today Iraq, in Buva. And the spoken language of Iraq at that time was Aramic and that became a Jewish language. The Targum into which the Torah was translated was the language that was used all throughout the Middle East before Arabic replaced it. And the Jews more and more used Aramaic to the exclusion of Hebrew to the point that an argument broke out as to whether it is even necessary to read the Torah in Hebrew since in some of the Synagogues in Bavil after every line of the Torah in Hebrew, the Targum would be read in Aramaic and pretty soon they said why read the Hebrew at all, lets read the Targum. But when the Karaite group arose and began to create for the first time a science of Hebrew grammar, began for the first time to create dictionaries of the language of the Bible, for example the great dictionary that was created in the Arabic language but in what we call Judeo-Arabic because it was Arabic written in Hebrew letters and full of Hebrew words, a language incidentally which almost died out in around the seventeenth century, although in speech it continued for a much longer period. I have little pamphlets published in Tunis and in Morocco written in Judeo-Arabic up to the time the Jews left Tunisia and Morocco in the last few years. So this language was still in use but this first dictionary of the Hebrew, the Tanakh of the Mekroft, written by David Ben Abraham El Fasi who lived in the tenth century was the work of a Karaite and again it had to be answered by the Rabbinites. And so the whole science of Hebrew grammar, Hebrew lexicology, the making of the dictionaries, arose out of again this intellectual ferment that was the contribution of the Karaites to the Jewish world. The tenth/eleventh century was a period of tremendous intellectual ferment, intellectual contributions coming from the Karaite Community and arousing a response in the Rabbinite Community.

The third thing the Karaites contributed to us was the remembrance of the centrality of the land of Israel and of Jerusalem That was the theme of Joe Pessah's talk this evening and I was glad that he mentioned it because that is central in the Karaite doctrine. One of the groups of the Karaites called the Abeleh Siyon made it a central point of their belief that they had to go to the land of Israel, that they had to live in Jerusalem. Every aspect of Karaite practice was infused with the remembrance of the destruction of the temple, the longing for Israel and Jerusalem and that centrality, that remembrance spilled over into the world of

Rabbinite Doctrine and practice.

And finally, and to me this is very important because I mentioned this before, Karaites showed that different paths can lead to the same God, to the same Torah. This is what we call in America religious pluralism. To me this is extremely important because if anything is going to tear the Jewish Community and Israel apart in the next few years, it's not the Arabs, it is its hatred of Jews for Jews. If anything poses a threat to the future of Israel, it is not the Arabs. Israel has weapons, Israel has soldiers, Israel has ability to meet the Arabs on the battlefield and to destroy their armies. But Jews have a tremendous talent for hating each other and for destroying each other. This is perhaps the saddest part of our history and it is not only between Karaites and Rabbinites, but within the Rabbinite Community itself over the centuries, the constant bickering, the hatreds, the animosities and today the refusal of Israel to recognize, and I'm talking now about the Rabbinites, not the government, the refusal to recognize the Reformed Jews and the Conservative Jews as valid alternative forms of Judaism will undoubtedly and inevitably lead to what we call a Ketouof, a conflict of culture that can tear the people of Israel apart. I will predict that it will be easier to be recognized as a Jew being a Karaite than it will being a Reformed Jew or a Conservative Jew.

So I think that it's a great contribution of the Karaites to have shown us centuries ago that we all are Jews, even though we have different paths to the Torah. There were on both sides not only men who threw barbs at each others and who aimed words of hatred at each other, but also important scholars who wanted reconciliation. The great Maimonites warned against the Karaites but at the same time he said they are Jews and we must rejoice with them and mourn with them, we must go to their weddings, to their circumcisions, and to their funerals. Elihou Belyatchi in Constantinople, one of the great Karaite leaders, also sought reconciliation with the Rabbinites. So there wasn't only hatred and animosity, but also Ahabat Israel, the love for the Jewsih people that animated men on both sides and motivated them to work together to find a way together.

So I am here tonight because I am a Jew and you are Jews. I believe in the Jewish people, I believe in our future. But there are grave question that face us as Jews, especially as Jews in America. Many of you have not been in this country as long as I have, having been born here and yet you see already the tremendous forces that operate in this country towards the disappearance of the Jewish people. There are six million Jews in the United States, it is estimated. A recent study carried out by the American Jewish Committee estimates that in twenty years there may be no more than four million Jews in this country. What happened to the other two million? They will not be killed off, thank God; they will not emigrate to Israel, unfortunately; they will disappear; They will disappear through assimilation and the further prediction is that if things go as they are today, the American Jewish Community may end up with a hard core of a million, perhaps a million and a half Jews in half a century. Now you know what this can mean to a community, coming from a community as small as the Karaite community is. A community that once numbered almost 40% of the Jewish people, which numbers in the thousands today, if you look at Cairo, you find the

handful of Karaites left in Cairo trying to guard the synagogue in Abbasia trying to keep the tradition alive, you realize what happens to a community when its numbers dwindle. How do we prevent this, how do we stop it?

I think you are taking the first step and that's what moves me about this occasion tonight. Not only that I see living Karaites here tonight but also that I see a determination not to disappear, not to be assimilated, but to continue Sevel Hayerousha (the yoke of inheritance) to continue the tradition of your people, of our people. What do we need? We need institutions, we need places in which to pray, we need schools in which to teach, we need the possibility of passing on that tradition and of practicing it. You are taking the first step. This is very important. As an old timer, just let me warn you -- don't be too ambitious. Don't try to go in for what so many Rabbinite Jews do, the so-called Ediphus Complex, of building great buildings, huge temples, it doesn't help. Again, you look at Cairo. Go through Harat El Yahud, see the Jewish buildings, the schools, the synagogues, and realize that not one of them is used for any Jewish purpose today. Buildings don't last, it's what's in the heart that lasts. Put the emphasis on your practice and on your teaching and not on the building in which it is done. I'm not against buildings, I think they're important. But this building to me represents one of the follies, with all due respect, this is one of the follies of the American Jewish Community. We have gone into building huge buildings to compete with the non-Jews. to look like their Churches, we don't need it. If we had more teachers, if we had more knowledge of the Torah, we would be much stronger than having these grand buildings. So we need education. And for education, we need educators. In order to educate our children, we ourselves have to know. And if there's any way that we can be of help, to help you train your own cadre of teachers, so that you can pass on your traditions, we will be happy to help you in anyway possible.

Secondly, I think it's extremely important that you make yourselves known so that Jews in general know who you are and that you exist. So that next time I say I am going to speak to a Karaite group, they don't say "Who", "What do you mean", "What are they". How do you do this? We can make a beginning through utilizing two institutions in this area. We have a museum in Berkeley, the Magnes Museum which is the Jewish Museum of the West. The San Francisco Jewish Community is now establishing a Jewish museum in the Federation Building in San Francisco. Now please don't think of museums as memorials of the dead. They are not. They can teach about the living as well. And if you want Jews to know about your tradition, about your past, make use of us. Let us, in the museums put on shows to which children from the various Sunday schools and Hebrew schools of the area will go, to which Jews from all over this area will go and will be able to see something to know about you, to know about your tradition, and incidentally where your own children can learn about their tradition.

And finally there is the question of research. We have to know more. Again Mr. Pessah mentioned a misinformation that is spread about the Karaites. I've read only too much of it. So little is known in general that anybody who wants to, can write whatever he wants to about the

Karaites and nobody can correct him. What is needed is more research. A lot of it is being done in Israel but not enough. There's practically nobody working on it here in the United States. And so here again it is something that has to came from you, a demand on us at the University. Come to us and say "work on the Karaites, do some research, publish, let the world know, let the world know the truths." And so I think that you have a task cut out for yourselves. And I congratulate you. I think it's wonderful to have a challenge. It's worderful to be a group, a community gathered together in brotherhood and friendship, not all of you are related to each other after all. Some of you are just friends of each other and acquaintances. It's a wonderful thing. You have a community, a Kehilah, a Edah. Now do something with it. The challenge is yours. I would like to help in any way that I can. And I know there are many people around the University who would be glad to help out. We're in the Jewish Community but we have to hear from you. Come to us and tell us this is what we want and we'll try to answer. God bless you all. Thank you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. You mentioned in your speech about coming to the University and asking that some research be done on the Karaites. Can you elaborate on that?

A. Let me give you an example of what I had in mind as a beginning. I said that it was very important for the community to know about you. I would like to do some research, I would like to have some of my graduate students involved in this, on who you are. Where you come from. Why are you here. What are your beliefs, what are your practices. To what extent do you still retain that spark of your tradition. Now many of you will feel this is an intrusion into your privacy, we would not publish any names. But we would like, I think as a beginning, to start with something like that, that will make it known that there is a living Karaite Community here. Secondly, a lot of research is initiated by interested people. These people are looking for topics to work on. If I know there is interest in the Karaite history, this is the sort of topic I can give to a graduate student who works with Arabic and Hebrew and is able to work with texts about your history and that's the sort of thing I mean.

Q. When I am asked what kind of Jew am I, I respond that I am a different type of Jew. What do you think should I respond to these kinds of questions?

A. That's a difficult thing to say, you see and this is why I think education is so important. I think it's important to know what kind of Jew you are and what is the difference. I think the first thing to say is that yours is a Jewish faith that is based on a different interpretation of the Torah than that of the other Jews and that's all. In other words, we both go back to the Torah but we interpret it differently and I wouldn't go much farther than that.

Q. Are the Karaim the oldest kind of Jews?

A. I thought that since I was 350 years old, I was the oldest Jew who ever lived. No, I don't think anybody can make that claim. You see here again some people like to say that the Karaites represent the oldest strain of Jewish interpretation. We can't prove it. Maybe research whould show that that's true. What we can say is

the Karaites represent a very ancient phenomenon in Judaism which was a phenomenon of the sect of not always agreeing with the majority opinion. And that's something that has happened throughout Jewish life. The Karaites in the days of Anan HaNassi were already carrying out a tradition that was older than that. It goes back to a man named Abu Issa. Abu Issa was carrying on a tradition that went back further than that. But how far back we can trace it is very difficult to say today. But that's not important; what's important is to say basically we are all Jews. We interpret the Torah differently, we have some different customs because of that interpretation, I don't think it's necessary to go into all the details of how Kashrut differs here and how that differs there, and what we do in the calendar and so forth and so on. That, we can do someday when we sit down and have a seminar on the differences between Karaism and Rabbinism.

Q. Do you see any similarity of groups coming from the Middle East to try to retain their identity and prevent assimilation?

A. Some of you may have heard this already because I have spoken to a number of groups but I always like to tell this story because the first time I ever went to Cairo in 1960, I was given an introduction to the Armenian Community in Cairo from the Armenians in Berkeley and I went to the Armenian Community and they said they would take me out to dinner but first they had a meeting at the Armenian Center in Cairo. A very important meeting, would I mind sitting through the meeting that evening. And I went along and it was fascinating because the discussion at that time, and remember this was 1960, Arab socialism was just beginning to take hold, everything was being sequestered, all sorts of businesses were being taken over and just as the Jews were being forced out economically, the Armenians were also being forced out. The leaders of the Armenian community were deciding that night, where shall we tell the members of the community to emigrate to. And why were they going to decide?! Because they decided if we let them go to the United States, they will assimilate. And they will not remain Armenian. So they were deciding that night "what country should we tell our people to go to" And they decided they should go to Paraguay, to Ethiopia, to Nigeria. Why? Because we know they won't intermarry there. If they go to the United States, they don't have that choice. But if you look at the Assyrians, and if you look at the Armenians in this country, and if you look at the Copts who are beginning to come in larger numbers, (I don't know if you realize that there's now a Coptic Church in Hayward), all of these are groups who are in many ways like this community in that they represent a very special tradition, different from the tradition around them. And they all face the very same great problems. And there are certain things that help to keep these groups going. One is maintaining their religious identity. And that's extremely important. Secondly, is language. If you have a distinctive language, you teach that language. Now the question here is what is your distinctive language. I hope it's not French. Because that may be the language you grew up with but it's not a Jewish language, unfortunately. Is it Arabic? No. It's Hebrew. Hebrew is our language. It's your language, it's my language, it's the language of the Jewish people. And that is the important thing that must be one of the basis for identity. Remember that the old tradition was that the Jews were distinguished in

Egypt in anciant times in the days of Pharoh by their dress and by their language and by their names. We don't distinguish ourselves by our names anymore, we try to fit in, become Scott and Derek and all the other ... it used to be Irving and Sheldon and so forth but we're much more sophisticated these days. But language and religion are the two things that I think have to be maintained in order to keep that identity and keep it strong.

Q. Where do real Karaites originally come from?
A. Well, from the land of Israel to begin with. Because that's where the ideas that gave rise to Karaism started out and then from Bavel, from what is today Iraq, from Baghdad, and from there, it spread in one direction to Damascus and to Egypt and the other direction up to the Istanbul, to the Crimea and up to Poland and Lithuania. So there's a northern Karaism and there's a southern Karaism. But they all started out in the same place and that was the land of Israel because the origins of this faith go back before Anan HaNassi as I said and although the first groups that are identified as being really Karaite are found either in Bavel or Iran obviously they go back to earlier ideas that come from the land of Israel.

Q. I always wondered, why is it that Jewish is called a race?
A. Who calls Jews a race? I know what you mean and that of course is something that's a part of our heritage and it's something that's true in the Middle East in general. It happens that we brought it over with us and that the idea that a religious group generally did not marry outside of it's own circles. And so the pool of genes within that group is reinforced generation after generation so that pretty soon you get to look alike so that it's not that you are a separate race but you have certain ethnic features. It's only because, for example, I can go into a Druze village in Israel and I can tell who's a Druze and who's not a Druze because the Druze never marry outside of their own group. And so they develp certain features that are very obviously Druze and similarly, Jews who intermarry only with other Jews, century after century, develop certain features because the genes are generally reinforced, especially, Jews who marry cousins, your genes are very much reinforced. So it' not a question of race, it's a question of ethinicity. In the Middle East, very often religion and ethinicity go together. But that's usually not the case. But don't let that get you down because Americans don't understand, it doesn't mean anything because Americans don't understand a lot of things.

NEWS & EVENTS

On June 9th, 1984, a Saturday morning service was held at Temple Sinai in memory of Moussa Ezial. We would like to thank the Ezial family for providing a beautiful buffet lunch in honor of their father.

Like some of our other services, the youth of the Karaites have played a substantial part in our services. I can't express the great importance of this if we're to keep the Karaites traditions alive. This last service that we had was special, not only did a youth participate, but a female read the Haftorah. The translation of the Haftorah was read by a youth. Many of the Barakhot were also read by youths. Hopefully this will continue in the future.

For those who were unable to attend the service, the portion was about a man named Manoah and his wife. The portion went as follows: An Angel went down from Heaven to speak with Manoah's wife that wasn't able to bear a child. This Angel told her that she will bear a son. The significant thing was that, once the child was born his hair was never to be cut. Also, during her pregnancy she was not to drink wine or eat anything that was unclean. Once Manoah's wife heard this she ran to tell her husband. When Manoah heard this, he wanted to go and speak with this Angel. Manoah wanted to hear for himself what needed to be done. Once again the Angel appeared and repeated to both Manoah and his wife what had to be done. Manoah asked the Angel his name; the Angel replied that he was angel of God and had no name. Manoah followed the Angel's orders, and Manoah's wife bore a son and named him Samson.

At the Service, we had two guests. Mr. Ira Nowinski and Dr. William Brinner.
Dr. William Brinner was our guest speaker at the Installation Dinner of our Board of Directors.

Ira is a photographer for the Judus Magnus Museum. He is doing a documentary on different Jewish groups. During the service, Ira took many pictures of the members of our Congregation. Ira is also doing a story for the Jewish Bulletin. So please look through your future bulletins for more information.
Thank you Dr. & Mrs. Brinner, and Ira Nowinski for joining us at our service.

Morris Moussa



MAZAL TOV
to
RACHELINE EL GAZZAR & NISSIM AYUN
shared their devotion and love to one another as our President, Mr. Jacob Masliah recited the Kettubah on their June 10th, 1984 wedding where many family and travelled from out of State to attend that happy event.

Z E K H E R

FROM	TO
JOSEPH ABEL	In loving memory of father YESHO'A BEN O'BADIA
ALAN OVADIA	In loving memory of father YESHO'A BEN O'BADIA
SABET DARWISH	In grateful remembrance of his father ABDOU ABRAHAM DARWISH,and MERIAM ABRAHAM DARWISH
REGINA DARWISH	In loving remembrance of father ELIAHOU MARZOUK, and brother ZAKI, and her sister SARAH
AZIZA MOUSSA PESSAH	In memory of her husband SHALOM MOUSSA PESSAH
LIETO MARZOUK	In loving memory of AMIN & ESTHER MARZOUK
HOSNI & LILIANE EL TAHAN	In memory of HAFEZ & SULTANA EL TAHAN, and YOUSSEF EL TAHAN & PAULA MOURAD
ELIE OVADIA	In memory of O'BADIA BEN YESHO'A, FORTUNEE BAT MOSHE MASSOUDA,and brothers MOSHE and JACOB
ALICE & ABRAHAM OVADIA	In memory of ESTHER SERANI and SELIM IBRAHIM
ABRAHAM MASSUDA	In Memory of MOSHE MASSUDA
FRED LICHAA	In memory of MAGDA EL TAWIL and YOUSSEF LICHAA
DAVID MOUSSA	In memory of HOSNI MOURAD, YOUSSEF SERGANI and SHALOM MOSHE PESSAH
ABRAHAM LICHAA	In memory of SULTANA ISAAC BAROUK MASSOUDA, Dr. YACOUB FARAG MASSUDA, CLAIRE MASSUDA, MASSUDA SUSAN LEVY, CLAIRE LEVY, VIVIANNE LEVY and ESTHER YOUSSEF ABDALLA
JOE ISAAC	In memory of NAZLI ISAAC
RACHEL LICHAA	In memory of GENE LICHAA and MAGDA BAT EL TAWIL
FLORA MENASHA	In memory of FOUAD EL TAWIL
LEONIE LICHAA	In memory of YOUSSEF LICHAA
LILIANE MASSUDA	In memory of NELLIE SALEH, ZAKI MENASHA and BAROUKH MASSOUDA
MARCELLE LICHAA	In memory to TEWFIK YOUSSEF LICHAA
RACHEL COHEN	In memory of NAZLIE ASLAN COHEN,and AZIZA COHEN
MICHAEL SADDIK	In memory of ELIE SADDIK and LOUNA SADDIK
IBRAHIM & REGINA LEVY	In memory of YOUSSEF IBRAHIM SOLIMAN, ESTHER FARAG RASSON SERGANI, AND SELIM LIETO SELIM
DAVID & NELLIE ABELL	In memory of MOUSSA ABDEL WAHED & MARIE ABDALLA
MARZOUK Y. MARZOUK	In loving memory of FORTUNEE MOURAD
AMIN PESSAH	In remembrance of his brother YOUSSEF PESSAH
LEONIE SIAHOU	In memory of CHALOM IBRAHIM MASSOUDA, BAROUK IBRAHIM SIAHOU, RACHEL YOUSSEF LICHAA, ESTHER DAOUD FARAG LICHAA,YAFET CHALOM MASSOUDA, MAURICE CHALOM MASSOUDA, DAVID CHALOM MASSOUDA, DAVID FARAG LICHAA & his wife KHOMESSA, SOUSOU DAOUD FARAG LICHAA,FARAG DAOUD FARAG LICHA ZAKI DAOUD FARAG LICHAA, FARAG YOUSSEF MASLIAH, GRACIA FARAG NOUNA, FORTUNEE DAVID FARAG LICHAA and BARAKAT DAOUD FARAG LICHAA
MARIE ASLAN	In memory of ELIAHOU YACOUB ASLAN, AMIN LICHAA, ELIE AMIN LICHAA, LAISSI AMIN LICHAA AND SOLTANA RASSON
AMIN & DENISE EZIAL	In memory of MOUSSA EZIAL
ELIE NOUNOU	In memory of BOGAYA AMIN MOUSSA and YOUSSEF BAROUKH ELIAHOU NOUNOU.
LUCY BAROUKH	In memory of AMIN MENASCHE



REFUAH SHLEMAH, our wishes for a full and speedy recovery

FROM	FOR
MAURICE PESSAH	YACOUB PESSAH & RACHEL PESSAH
JOE ABEL	FLORE MOURAD
SABET DARWISH	REGENA DARWISH
REMY PESSAH	ALICE OVADIA and FLORE MOURAD
ALAN OVADIA	LOUNA BAROUKH COHEN
JOE ABEL	LOUNA BAROUKH COHEN
GERMAINE DARWISH	LEON DARWISH



TODAH RABBAH TO OUR HONORARY DONORS

MR. & MRS. ELIE KHEDER
MR. & MRS. EMIEL KHEDER
MR. & MRS. ABRAHAM LICHAA
MR. & MRS. ELIOT LISHA
MR. & MRS. DAVID PERLMAN

FROM A GRATEFUL CONGREGATION TO OUR FAITHFUL DONORS:

MR. & MRS. DAVID ABELL
MR. & MRS. MOUSSA BAROUKH
MR. & MRS. LEON DARWISH
MR. & MRS. ABRAHAM EL GAMIL
MR. SOLIMAN EL GAZZAR
MR. & MRS. MOURAD EL KODSI
MR. & MRS. ISHAK HEFEZ
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DR. & MRS. LEON LICHAA
MRS. LOUNA LICHAA
MR. & MRS. ELIE MESSAFI
MR. & MRS. FRED MOURAD
MRS. MARIE MOURAD
MR. & MRS. ELIE MOUSSA
MR. & MRS. JOSEPH RASSON
MR. & MRS. YACOUB PESSAH

SCHEDULE OF PRAYERS

Unless otherwise mentioned, all Prayers are held on the First Saturday of every month at
TEMPLE SINAI OF PENINSULA SINAI CONGREGATION
499 Boothbay Avenue
Foster City, Ca. 94404

NOTE
The Temple is Kosher. No heating is allowed on Shabbat.
Only dairy foods and cakes made with vegetable oil are acceptable.

September 8th	Shabbat	Zakher for Yacoub El Gazzar

FOR YOUR TAX PURPOSES, OUR IRS TAX EXEMPTION NUMBER IS

77-0000-638